

Subject: Comment on petition for rulemaking #RM-10787

From: Brian Tanner  
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I wish to echo the position of National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (NCVEC) as outlined in the petition for rulemaking #RM-10787. In this petition, the NCVEC accurately outlines what I believe is true, that being the Amateur Radio Community is suffering loss of potential members to its ranks as a direct result of the requirement of CW proficiency in Element 1 of the General and Extra license classes.

In my own personal experience, I am unable to successfully pass the Element 1 testing as my ability to recognize character sequences in CW is limited. I do not understand why my cognitive ability to recognize DIT's and DAH's in character strings is limited but I am convinced that there are many people like myself who just don't get it. (When I was little, I had difficulties in learning English and although I am now quite successful in the engineering profession, I still find it difficult to spell consistently.) I would very much like to participate in Amateur Radio communications on the HF bands as this mode of communication poses interesting challenges as well as being a potential outlet to perform needed service to the community.

The heart of Amateur Radio is in providing our communities protection and service programs. I have volunteered at my local chapter of the Red Cross for emergency communications duties during recent brush fires. In addition, I am a den leader in my son's Cub Scout pack. I have demonstrated Amateur Radio to my den and showed them how to write CW messages and receive them. They were interested in Amateur Radio and how to communicate to others when unforeseen problems come up. The majorities of my Cub Scouts are not that motivated about CW and had problems with reading CW messages. They are very interested in learning more about Amateur Radio but I have come to the conclusion that most are not willing to overcome the CW barrier.

In this light, I am convinced that retaining the Element 1 as part of the General and Extra class license requirements will unnecessarily limit participation in Amateur Radio in the HF bands of the future of the hobby – our youth. We are competing with many other activities for our youth that provide near instant gratification to the participants. The tedious learning of an obsolete language will not significantly benefit either our communities or our youth. We are on the verge of an explosion of radio features that will be unleashed by the introduction of software defined radios, and in order to properly capitalize on this upcoming development, we need to align the regulations governing Amateur Radio to best fit with providing not only an enjoyable hobby but also providing a strong sense of community and involvement in our community.

I would call upon our regulators to recognize the vital and important contributions that Amateur Radio has been and will continue to provide to our communities and provide a regulatory environment that helps Amateur Radio grow and prosper.

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